

The Arian Controversy

195

personal appeal of his bishop and disregarded the wishes of a majority of the Alexandrian clergy, and we may reasonably suppose that his polemics would grow all the more bitter as he became aware of the rapidly deepening estrangement. He would sharpen the edge of his sarcasm upon the logical obtuseness of his nominal superiors, for his appeal was always to reason and to logic. Given my premises, he would say, where is the flaw in my deductions, and wherein do my syllogisms break down? By the year 321 Arius was the typical rebellious priest, profoundly self-confident, rejoicing in controversy, dealing hard blows all around him, and prepared to stoop to any artifice in order to gain adherents. To win over the mob, he was ready to degrade his principles to the mob's understanding.

Alexander summoned a provincial synod of a hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops to pronounce judgment upon the doctrines and the person of Arius. Attended by his principal supporters, Arius appeared before the synod and boldly stood to his guns. He maintained, that is to say, that God had not always been Father; that the Word was the creature and handiwork of the Father; that the Son was not like the Father according to substance and was neither the true Word nor the true Wisdom, having been created by the Word and Wisdom which are in God; that by His nature He was subject to change like all other rational creatures; that the Son does not perfectly know either the Father or His own essence, and that Jesus Christ is not true God. The majority of the bishops listened with horror as Arius